

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USDEL ALEXANDRIA

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION--NEW AGREEMTN IN SINAI

1. SUMMARY. POLARIZATION OF EDITORIAL COMMENT ON PROSPECTS FOR NEW INTERIM AGREEMENT CONTINUES TO SHARPEN IN FRAMEWORK OF INTENSE MEDIA INTEREST IN DETAILS OF EVOLVING ACCORD AND RESTRAINED SYRIAN REACTION. LEADING INDEPENDENT "AN-NAHAR" ATTRIBUTES POLARIZATION DIRECTLY TO LOSS OF FLEXIBILITY AMONG REJECTIONISTS, WHO MUST NOW ATTACK BOTH EGYPT AND SYRIA. PRO-SYRIAN "ASH-SHARQ" AND PRO-SOVIET PRO-EGYPTIAN "ASH-SHA'B" CONTINUE TO DEFEND EGYPT'S POSITION OF ACCEPTING NEW INTERIM AGREEMENT AS REALISTIC AND RESPONSIBLE. LEFTIST PRO-NASSERITE "AS-SAFIR" ON OTHER HAND ACCUSES EGYPT OF "ABANDONING MOST BASIC DUTIES OF ARAB SOLIDARITY" AND WARNS OF "INTENSIFIED EGYPTIAN ATTACK ON PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION IN LEBANON." ECHOING LATTER THEME, PRO-LIBYAN "AL-KIFAH AL-'ARABI" CRITICIZES WHAT IT SEES AS GROWING IDENTITY OF VIEWS BETWEEN LEBANESE AND EGYPTIAN

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GOVERNMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. MICHE ABU JAWDEH, CHIEF EDITOR OF LEADING INDEPENDENT "AN-NAHAR", WRITES: "IF IT IS FOUND, AS AMERICAN SECSTATE SAYS, THAT SYRIA IS TO BE NEXT STAGE, THEN ONLY SERIOUS ATTITUDES POSSIBLE FOR ARABS WILL BE TO SUPPORT EGYPT AND SHOW UNDERSTANDING TOWARDS SYRIA. GIVEN THIS SITUATION, NOTHING REMAINS FOR REJECTIONISTS EXCEPT BASIC POSITION OF PRINCIPLE, I.E. REJECTION OF COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT ENTIRELY MOST OF REJECTIONISTS WHO HAVE BEEN TRYING TO DIVIDE EGYPT AND SYRIA WILL NOW JOIN RANKS OF ABSOLUTE REJECTIONISTS, WHO FROM BEGINNING REFUSED TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN CAIRO AND DAMASCUS. THEN, THERE WILL BE TWO COMPLETELY CONTRADICTORY ARAB POSITIONS--THAT OF ACCEPTANCE AND THAT OF REJECTION."

3. COLUMNIST NUR AD-DIN AL-MUDAWWAAR WRITES IN PRO-SYRIAN "ASH-SHARQ": "IT IS UNFAIR TO ACCUSE EGYPT OF ACCEPTING CONCESSIONS.... CAIRO'S EMPHASIS ON PURELY MILITARY NATURE OF NEW AGREEMENT CANNOT BUT MEAN IT WILL SIGN NO TEXT THAT COMMITS IT TO END STATE OF WAR FOR EVEN ONE DAY AS LONG AS ARAB LANDS, SYRIAN OR EGYPTIAN, AND PALESTINIAN PEOPLE'S LEGITIMATE RIGHTS CONTINUE TO SUFFER OPPRESSION."

4. PRO-SOVIET AND PRO-EGYPTIAN "ASH-SHA'B" WRITES: "KISSINGER IS UNDOUBTEDLY MANEUVERING TO ACHIEVE AMERICA'S AIM OF PRESERVING ITS INTERESTS IN ARAB REGION WITHOUT TOUCHING ISRAELI STRUCTURE. ARAB LEADERS RECOGNIZE SECRETS AND AIMS OF AMERICAN GAME, BUT ALSO RECOGNIZE INTERESTS AND HOPES OF THEIR NATION."

5. COLUMNIST JOSEPH SAMAHA WRITES IN LEFTIST, PRO-NASSERITE "AS-SAFIR": "SUCCESS OF AMERICAN EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE NEW DISENGAGEMENT ... EMBRACING EGYPTIAN REGIME'S CLEAR AND OPEN ABANDONMENT OF MOST BASIC DUTIES OF ARAB SOLIDARITY TOWARDS PARTNERS OF OCTOBER WAR -- SYRIA AND PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE -- PROVIDES AMPLE JUSTIFICATION FOR INTENSIFYING ATTACK ON PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION IN LEBANON. PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ARE MENTIONED IN NONE OF PROPOSED SETTLEMENTS, AND THIS GIVES LEBANESE NATIONAL MOVEMENT SUFFICIENT REASON TO BE WORRIED OVER PARTIAL SETTLEMENT, UNCLASSIFIED

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ESPECIALLY SINCE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT'S HINTS, WHICH WARN RESISTANCE TO BEHAVE OR FACE EXTERMINATION IN LEBANON, HAVE BECOME ABUNDANTLY CLEAR."

6. PRO-LIBYAN "AL-KIFAH AL-'ARABI" WRITES IN LEAD EDITORIAL: "EGYPTIAN-LEBANESE RAPPROCHEMENT HAS BECOME VERY SIGNIFICANT PHENOMENON IN RECENT DAYS... THEY HAVE COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF PROBLEM OF ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT;

NEITHER WANTS TO BE CONFRONTATION STATE; BOTH BELIEVE IN
LEADERSHIP OF U.S. AND IN ITS DOMINANT ROLE IN REGION'S
AFFAIRS.... LEBANESE OFFICIALS MUST STOP THIS GRADUAL
DRIFT INTO COURSE OF SADAT'S POLICY AND RETURN TO
PRINCIPLES THAT HAVE GOVERNED LEBANON'S ARAB POLICY
SINCE DAWN OF INDEPENDENCE."
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